Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 00745 311832Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4446

S E C R E T MANAMA 745

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MORG, BA
SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST FORCE: MARCH 31 MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: MANAMA 717

1. MARCH 31 MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER HAD ONE MAJOR RESULT: GOB WANTS USG TO PROPOSE METHOD, AND TEXT, FOR HANDLING LEGAL SITUATION WHICH WILL ARISE FOLLOWING DE-HOMEPORTING AND TERMINATION OF PRESENT AGREEMENT. FONMIN, RECALLING OUR PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS OF THIS POINT (MANAMA 649 AND 676), SAID IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NEW LEGAL ARRANGEMENT BE AS "INFORMAL" AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER THAT IT NOT BE SEEN AS SIMPLY ONE BASING AGREEMENT BEING REPLACED BY ANOTHER. I SAID WE UNDERSTOOD THIS POINT AND WOULD WORK TO MEET IT IN SO FAR AS POSSIBLE. I ADDED THAT DE-HOMEPORTING IS A VERY MAJOR CHANGE IN SITUATION, SHOULD BE SEEN AS SUCH, AND THAT EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON THIS FACT. HE AGREED AND SAID THAT WHEN TIME COMES TO MAKE PUBLIC NEW ARRANGMENT, WE SHOULD WORK TOGETHER TO STRESS NATURE OF THE CHANGE, AND TO REITERATE LONG AND CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. FONMIN WONDERED IF NEW

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ARRANGEMENT COULD BE WRAPPED UP IN TWO OR THREE WEEKS; GOB WOULD LIKE TO MOVE FAST NOW THAT BASIC AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED. I SAID I HOPED WE COULD MOVE FAST BUT THAT I DO NOT YET HAVE A GOOD IDEA OF JUST HOW FAST USG WILL BE ABLE TO MOVE.

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2. FONMIN EXPANDED A BIT ON HIS VIEW OF HOW WE MIGHT HANDLE NEW ARRANGEMENT. HE SAID THAT DETAILS OF CONTINUING NAVY PRESENCE COULD BE SPELLED OUT IN A DOCUMENT WHICH WOULD BE ATTACHED TO AN EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES IN WHICH CONTINUING APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN PORTIONS OF OLD AGREEMENT WOULD BE AGREED. I SAID WE DO NOT YET HAVE CLEAR IDEA OF HOW LEGAL ARRANGEMENT MIGHT BE REFLECTED ON PAPER BUT THAT I WOULD REPORT HIS IDEA.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER MADE NO REFERENCE TO QUID PRO QUO AND NONE TO ANY REDUCTION WHATEVER IN NAVY'S SHORE FACILITIES. ONLY DETAIL HE RAISED WAS CONTINUING PRESENCE HERE OF NAVY AIRCRAFT, WHICH HE SAID WAS "FINE" WITH GOB. I SUSPECT THAT IF GOB IS GOING TO PRESS FOR REDUCTIONS IN SHORE FACILITIES, I WILL HEAR ABOUT IT WHEN WE BEGIN TO PUT THE DETAILS ON PAPER. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE IN GOOD NEGOTIATING POSITION, HAVING GOTTEN FURTHER WITH OUR MAJOR, OPENING CONCESSION--DE-HOMEPORTING--THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED A FEW MONTHS AGO.

4. I REALIZE COMPLEXITIES OF CIRCULAR 175 AUTHORITY, AND OF REACHING AGREEMENT WITHIN USG ON LEGAL FRAMEWORK WHICH MEETS NEEDS OF THIS SITUATION, BUT WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT'S ESTIMATE OF HOW FAST WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO

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COMPLETE THESE STEPS.

5. DEPT PLEASE REPEAT AS APPROPRIATE.

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